

# Equine Assisted Psychotherapy



Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) incorporates horses experientially for emotional growth and learning. It is a collaborative effort between a licensed therapist and a horse professional working with the clients and horses to address treatment goals. Because of its intensity and effectiveness, it is considered a short-term or "brief" approach.

EAP is a powerful and effective therapeutic approach that has an incredible impact on individuals, youth, families, and groups. EAP addresses a variety of mental health and human development needs including behavioral issues, attention deficit disorder, PTSD, substance abuse, eating disorders, depression, anxiety, relationship problems and communication needs.

## An EAP Session Consists of:

- Trial and error learning by doing
- Reflect on interaction between clients and horses
- Clients questioning, investigating, experimenting, solving problems, being creative, and constructing meaning
- Identify current beliefs and attitudes
- Practice new strategies to achieve goals
- Read and react to nonverbal communication
- Confront behavior and attitudes
- Acts as a metaphor for relationships and social interactions
- 100% on the ground (no riding)
- Solution-focused model
- Adheres to a Strict Code of Ethics

## Why Horses are so effective in EAP:

Horses have unique organizational cultures. They live in families or herds providing vast opportunities for metaphor

Distinct personalities, attitudes and moods – what works with one may not work with another

As prey animals, horses have exceptional ability to read non-verbal communication – people must change thoughts, attitudes and behaviors to get different results. Size and strength – opportunity to overcome fear and develop confidence



## An EAP session can have an Impact on:

Confidence; Self-efficacy; Communication; Trust; Anxiety reduction; Resilience; Impulse modulation; Social skills; Assertiveness; Knowing Boundaries; Creative freedom; Social Structure – "Herd" (family) groups, "bands" and individuals with the "herd"; Structure and substructures are based on "rank" and require boundaries; Understanding and enforcement of boundaries are key to emotional and physical safety; Develop behaviors to deal with demands of living in the "system" structure; Use of keen observation skills; Leadership; Work requires focusing on the "process"; Changes in "system" can be planned or unplanned

All sessions are based from the EAGALA Model. The EAGALA Model EAP is solidly grounded in well-established and researched theories of psychotherapy. EAGALA Model EAP is a clinical advance on these established practices where the incorporation of horses in psychotherapy in a deliberate, principled, thoughtful and professional manner catalyzes change. Clinical success preceded systematic study. EAGALA model EAP has been effectively employed in the treatment of numerous behavioral and emotional disorders.



Photo By Michael Ervin



Equine Assisted Psychotherapy ~ Equine Assisted Learning  
Helping with the Power of Horses

